

US Army Corps of Engineers

Philadelphia District

Wanamaker Building 100 Penn Square East Philadelphia, PA 19107-3390 ATTN: CENAP-OP-R

Public Notice

Public Notice No.

Date

MAY 1 6 2006

Application No.

File No.

CENAP-OP-R-200401135

In Reply Refer to:

Regulatory Branch

Reference is made to Department of the Army permit CENAP-OP-R-200401135-1, dated October 27, 2005. This permit authorizes the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection, Division of Fish and Wildlife to conduct reef deployment activities at fifteen (15) artificial reef sites in the Atlantic Ocean along the coast of New Jersey. The fifteen artificial reef sites are identified as follows: (#1) Sandy Hook, (#2) Sea Girt, (#3) Shark River, (#4) Axel Carlson, (#5) Barnegat Light, (#6) Garden State North, (#7) Garden State South, (#8) Little Egg, (#9) Atlantic City, (#10) Great Egg, (#11) Ocean City, (#12) Wildwood, (#13) Cape May, (#14) Deep Water, and (#15) Townsends Inlet.

The District has received a request to modify the above referenced permit document. The purpose of this notice is to solicit comments and recommendations from the public concerning issuance of a modification to the above referenced Department of the Army permit.

ACTIVITY: The applicant has requested a modification for four (4) of the authorized artificial reef sites. Specifically, the applicant is requesting a modification of the required minimum clearances above the reef structures for the following reef sites: #1 - Sandy Hook reef site, #4 - Axel Carlson reef site (a.k.a. Mantaloking reef site), #5 - Barnegat Light reef site, and #10 - Great Egg reef site. It should be noted that the applicant has not requested a modification of the reef sites boundaries or locations. Details of the requested modification are shown on the attached plans.

- #1. <u>Sandy Hook Reef</u> site is located approximately 1.4 miles east of Sea Bright in Monmouth County, New Jersey. This site is located approximately 5.7 miles at a direction of 157 degrees from Sandy Hook Channel. The Sandy Hook site currently requires a minimum vertical clearance of forty (40) feet below mean low water. The permittee has requested that the minimum vertical clearance be reduced to 30 feet.
- #4. Axel Carlson Reef site (formerly known as Mantoloking Reef site) is located approximately 2.1 miles east of Mantoloking in Ocean County, New Jersey. This site is located approximately 4.35 Nautical miles at a direction of 166 degrees from Manasquan Inlet. The Axel Carlson site currently requires a minimum

vertical clearance of fifty (50) feet below mean low water. The permittee has requested that the minimum vertical clearance be reduced to 40 feet.

- #5. Barnegat Light Reef site is located approximately 3.1 Nautical miles east of Barnegat Light in Ocean County, New Jersey. This site is approximately 3.1 miles from Barnegat Inlet at a direction of 103 degrees. The Barnegat Light site currently requires a minimum vertical clearance of fifty (50) feet below mean low water. The permittee has requested that the minimum vertical clearance be reduced to 40 feet.
- #10. <u>Great Egg Reef</u> site is located approximately 7 nautical miles southeast of Atlantic City in Atlantic County, New Jersey. This site is located approximately 9.2 miles at a direction of 110 degrees from Great Egg Harbor Inlet. The Great Egg site currently requires a minimum vertical clearance of fifty (50) feet below mean low water. The permittee has requested that the minimum vertical clearance be reduced to 40 feet.

Based upon our review of this request, we have determined that the proposed modification would not affect listed species or their critical habitat pursuant to Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act as amended. As the evaluation of this application continues, additional information may become available which could modify this preliminary determination.

The decision whether to issue a modification will be based on an evaluation of the activity's probable impact including its cumulative impacts on the public interest. The decision will reflect the national concern for both protection and utilization of important resources. The benefits which reasonably may be expected to accrue from the work must be balanced against its reasonably foreseeable detriments. All factors which may be relevant to the work will be considered including the cumulative effects thereof; among those are conservation, economics, aesthetics, general environmental concerns, wetlands, cultural values, fish and wildlife values, flood hazards, flood plain values, land use, navigation, shore erosion and accretion, recreation, water supply and conservation, water quality, energy needs, safety, food and fiber production, mineral needs and welfare of the people. Our particular attention will be directed to the potential impacts on navigation.

The Corps of Engineers is soliciting comments from the public; Federal, State, and local agencies and officials; Indian Tribes; and other interested parties in order to consider and evaluate the impacts of this permit modification.

Any comments received will be considered by the Corps of Engineers to determine whether to modify the existing permit. To make this decision, comments are used to assess impacts on

endangered species, historic properties, water quality, general environmental effects, and the other public interest factors listed above.

Comments on the proposed work should be submitted, in writing, within 15 days to the District Engineer, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Philadelphia District, Wanamaker Building, 100 Penn Square East, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania 19107-3390.

This permit modification would not alter the previously authorized footprint of the artificial reef sites. As such, we have concluded that the requested modification would not affect any properties listed on or eligible for inclusion on the National Register of Historic Places.

The Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act, as amended by the Sustainable Fisheries Act 1996 (Public Law 104-267), requires all Federal agencies to consult with the National Marine Fisheries Service on all actions, or proposed actions, permitted, funded, or undertaken by the agency that may adversely effect Essential Fish Habitat (EFH). A previous EFH Assessment was prepared for this permit document and fully coordinated with the National Marine Fisheries Service. This permit modification only addresses the required vertical clearances for deployed reef materials. We have determined that this request would not affect any EFH resources and as such, no further coordination with the National Marine Fisheries Service is required with respect to this modification.

Any person may request, in writing, to the District Engineer, within the comment period specified in this notice, that a public hearing be held to consider this modification request. Requests for a public hearing shall state in writing, with particularity, the reasons for holding a public hearing.

Additional information concerning this permit application may be obtained by calling Mr. Edward Bonner at (215) 656-5932 between the hours of 1:00 and 3:30 p.m. or writing this office at the above address.

Frank J. Cianfrani

Chief, Regulatory Branch







